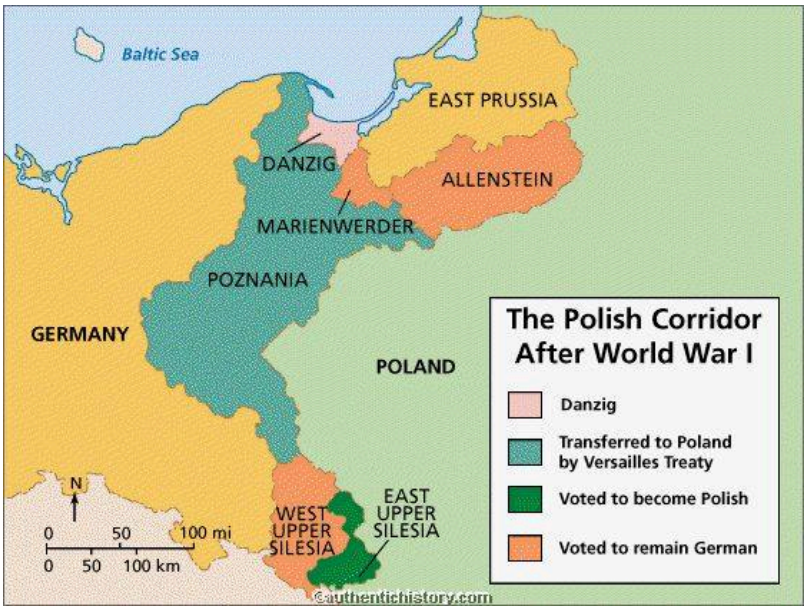
Causes of World War II

There is general agreement that the principal **causes of World War II** were the unfair and imposed **Treaty of Versailles**, the Treaty of Trianon, the Treaty of St.Germain and the chronic injustices in them.[1][2][3][4][5]. Since the imposition of the treaties, Germany's position of them being "unacceptable" was made clear.[6] Germany thereafter sought to use Article 19 of the League of Nations' Covenant (incorporated in the Versailles Treaty),[7] which said

> *The Assembly may from time to time advise the reconsideration by Members of the League of Treaties which have become inapplicable, and the consideration of international conditions which might endanger the peace of the world.*[8]

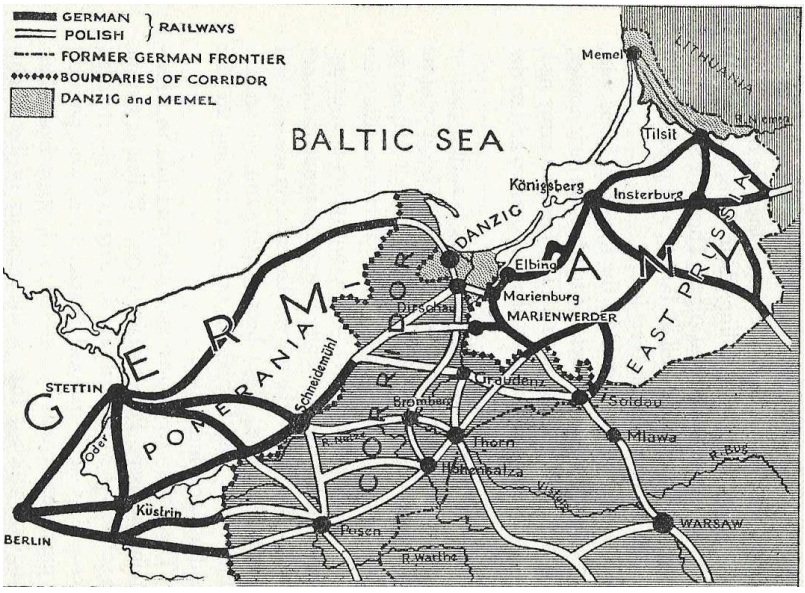


Dismemberment of eastern Germany by Versailles Treaty creating the Polish Corridor; The world did not learn from this devastating mistake, the Tehran Conference of 1943 once again planned the dismemberment of Germany after WWII.

In March 1930, German Chancellor Heinrich Brüning and his government embarked on restructuring the Weimar state with the ultimate goal to overturn the Versailles Treaty.[9][10]

On 30 January 1937, Germany formerly repudiated and withdrew from the Versailles Treaty.[11][12]

Other reasons included the deliberate aggressive encirclement of Germany by western Allies, France in particular, in numerous treaties.



Map showing the very considerable German railway network (including that to Warsaw) which was butchered by the Versailles Treaty causing chaos. Germany was not compensated for this dismemberment and loss of capital infrastructure and investment. Poland not did their best to disrupt railway traffic between Germany proper, Danzig and East Prussia.

Mainstream victors' historians tend to agree on 1 September 1939, the beginning of the German-Poland campaign, as the commencement of World War II. Revisionists argue that the declaration of war upon Germany by Britain and France three days later widened what should have been a localised conflict, and created a *world war*.

On 17 September 1939, the Soviet Union also invaded about 40 % of Poland but Britain and France failed to declare war on Russia.

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Since 1918 the "accepted" position regarding **guilt** for World War I has been that of the Western Plutocratic Allies, clearly authored to support and justify their position - a "victors' history". In 1919 these Allies forced Germany to accept primary guilt for the war, and charged her an indemnity of 25 trillion dollars. This was written into the Versailles Treaty. For almost a century this "guilt" has been regurgitated and reprinted *ad infinitum* in an attempt to make the lie truth (*Kriegsschuldluge*). This responsibility was, of course, a fiction[13][14]. In 1925 Count Max Montegelas published *The Case for the Central Powers - an Impeachment of the Versailles Verdict*, in an early attempt to redress the balance demonstrated this. On December 14th that year Foreign Minister Gustav Stresemann proclaimed himself the leader of Germany in her passionate repudiation of the 'War Guilt' clause.[15] Two years later history Professor Harry Elmer Barnes stated: "There is no competent and informed historian in any country who has studied the problem of the genesis of the World War in a thorough fashion who does not regard the theory of war guilt held in Articles 227 and 231 in the Versailles Treaty to be wholly false, misleading, and unjust."[16]

It has been shown that Russia[17][18][19]. Serbia[20][21] and France were the prime movers[22], but the Russian Empire had now fallen to the Bolsheviks. The Austro-Hungarian Empire had been broken up into fragments by the Western Allies, so only Germany was left to blame and, of course, to pay reparations. France's responsibilities for her war conspiracies dating back to 1891 were ignored.

Germany lost all her colonies along with Alsace-Lorraine, northern Schleswig, Danzig, the provinces of Posen and West Prussia[23], parts of Upper Silesia with its industries and coal mines, and the coal-fields of the Saar.[24]

The Allies occupied the three Rhineland zones, and only evacuated one zone, the Cologne zone, towards the end of 1926. After a "final" agreement on reparations was reached in the 1929 Young Plan, the Allied occupation of the Rhineland ended on 30 June 1930.

Map of Germany & Austria showing their lost territories in Europe (not including those in Yugoslavia).

Reparations

Versailles empowered the Reparations Commission to collect 5,000 million US dollars before 1st May 1921 and then to announce the total amount Germany would have to meet. Disputes on this liability let to an Allied ultimatum in March 1921 and an extension of Allied occupation to Düsseldorf and two other German towns, and subsequently the declaration that Germany was in default. The Reparations Commission finally announced the German liability at about 33,000 million dollars, a huge and unrealistic sum. The reparations arguments continued through this decade.[25].

German Chancellor Hermann Müller

The Second London Conference on Reparations, 30 April - 5 May 1921 set reparations by Germany at an annual rate of about 500 million US dollars, plus, in addition, an amount equivalent to 26% of German exports. Unable to meet all of these appalling sums, saw France and Belgium occupy the Ruhr, the centre of German industry. That was followed by two imposed 'Plans':

- The Dawes Plan, 9 August 1924, agreed loans to help Germany meet the reparations.[26] That was followed by:
- The Young Plan, 31 August 1929, Germany undertook to make annual reparations payments in 1929 and ending in 1988 on average about 1,700 million Reichsmarks annually.[27]

In 1931 the President of the Reichsbank, Hjalmar Schacht, published a book setting forth the arguments for *The End of Reparations* which, he said, were "bleeding Germany white".[28]

On 9 January 1932 Reich Chancellor Dr. Heinrich Brüning stated in an interview given to the Wolff Press Agency that Germany's financial situation made it impossible to continue these "political payments".[29]

Predictions

> *The [eastern] frontiers of Germany, as laid down by Articles 27 and 28 of the Treaty, constitute the greatest violation of the principles of self-determination, and are mere allotments of territory, marked out at random, and in violation of International Law....The labour of centuries was destroyed at a blow.* ~ Professor Francesco Nitti, sometime Prime Minister of Italy.

> *This is not peace. It is an armistice for 20 years.....There (the Polish Corridor) lies the root of the next war.* ~ French Marshal Ferdinand Foch.

> *It is impossible to imagine a peaceful solution to the problem of the Polish Corridor*, wrote Austrian parliamentarian Karl Renner to his Foreign Ministry.

German Foreign Minister Gustav Stresemann (d.Oct 1929)

In response to the Versailles Treaty the German Government stated:

> *No nation, even amongst the Allied and Associated Powers, can expect the German people to accept peace-terms which must detach vital members from the body-corporate of Germany without any consultation of the populations involved.*[30] The new Foreign Minister Hermann Müller (SPD) stated in July 1919: *The German government would leave in no doubt its intentions to revise this treaty.*

Every German Chancellor and Government between 1919 and 1939 was pledged to what they described as "revision" of the imposed and unjust and eastern borderlands, Danzig and Memel.[31] In particular they believed Article 19 of the League of Nations' Covenant (which was incorporated in the Treaty of Versailles), which said "The Assembly may from time to time advise the reconsideration by Members of the League of Treaties which have become inapplicable and the consideration of international conditions which might endanger the peace of the world."[32] Most notable was German Foreign Minister (Nov 1923 - Oct 1929) Gustav Stresemann (German Peoples' Party - DVP), whose aim was to use diplomatic methods.[33][34][35][36]

Stresemann took part in the Treaty of Locarno (comprising seven pacts), signed on 12 October 1925, where Germany's western borders as laid down in the Versailles Treaty were confirmed (huge demonstrations against this in Berlin), but the question of the eastern borders with Poland, and Danzig, remained a matter for future arbitration.[37] The British were clear, at this point, that "Germany was unwilling to accept as final the existing imposed territorial settlement in the east." A semi-official letter written by Sir Austen Chamberlain on the 14 October, 1925, from Locarno, addressed to Sir William Tyrrell shows that the Germans at that time declared that "it was impossible for them to say that they renounced war as a means of ultimately changing their eastern frontier".[38] The important passage reads:

> *The Germans say in effect that they are prepared so to tie themselves up by the treaty of arbitration that they cannot in fact make war, but they declare that it is impossible for them to say that they renounce war as a means of ultimately changing their eastern frontier. This declaration has, of course, not been made at the sittings of the conference, but it reappears continually in the conversations which I and other members of the delegation have with the Germans.*

In the year after Stresemann's death, in March 1930, Chancellor Heinrich Brüning and his government embarked on restructuring the Weimar state with the ultimate goal to overturn the Versailles Treaty[39]. On 5 September 1929 at the Tenth Ordinary Session of the Assembly of the League of Nations the French Prime Minister, Aristide Briand, had placed before the assembly his proposal for a European Federal Union, which took the form of a long *Memorandum* which is reproduced in *Documents on British Foreign Policy 1919-1939*[40] Sir Horace Rumbold, British Ambassador in Berlin, spoke with Chancellor Brüning on 27 May 1930 on this subject, saying that such a federation would mean that European nations must agree, as a pre-condition, that the present frontiers must be accepted. Brüning replied:

> *Definitely no government in Germany, whatever its political complexion, could subscribe to such a condition. If it did it would be swept away.....our eastern frontiers, as at present drawn, could not be considered as fixed for all time.*

This statement was repeated to the Ambassador by Carl von Schubert, then Secretary-of-State at the German Ministry of Foreign Affairs, who added that the eastern borders "were absurd and were bound to come up for revision later on", during an interview the next day.[41]

Dr. Rudolf Breitscheid (SPD politician) said: "No German can ever recognise the demarcation of the frontiers in the East as just or practical."[42]

On 10 August 1930 the conservative Reichstag Minister Gottfried Treviranus[43] made a speech during which he said "The East demands the unification of all German people. In the depths of our souls we are thinking of the truncated Vistula lands, of the unhealed wounds in the eastern flank, that withered lung of the Reich. We think of the iniquitous insistence of Wilson on the unnatural cutting of of East Prussia and of the half-breed condition to which Danzig was condemned.....an unjust demarcation of the frontiers."[44]

Hitler also contributed an article to the London newspaper *The Sunday Express* in September 1930, in part of which he stated:

> *We, the National Socialists, demand the revision of the Versailles Treaty; we demand the revision of The Young Plan; we demand the return to Germany of the Polish Corridor, which is like a strip of flesh cut from our body as it cuts Germany in two. It is a national wound that bleeds continuously, and will continue to bleed till the land is returned to us. We will rouse all Germans against this injustice.*[45]
>
> *As for the 'Polish Corridor', it may be definitely said that Germany will never tolerate a condition of things by which East Prussia is separated from the German Reich.* ~ Tomáš G. Masaryk, Czech Statesman.[46].

Julius Curtius, German Foreign Minister (Liberal DVP), stated on 20 November 1930:

> *There are parts of this Treaty which cannot remain the law of Europe if our continent is to live in peace and security. This is an unshakeable truth. It has deepened existing dissensions and made the unrest in Europe more complete.*
>
> *It must be remembered that a war against Poland to rectify the eastern frontiers would be in the nature of a crusade. A large part of the population would eagerly join in it without compulsion.* ~ Sir Horace Rumbold, 9th Bt., British Ambassador in Berlin, 26 Feb 1931.[47]

In a special radio broadcast to North America on 29 July 1932, the Chancellor of Germany, Herr von Papen, stated that the provisions of the Treaty of Versailles were the root cause of Germany's present difficulties.[48]

Even before Versailles, President Theodore Roosevelt stated prophetically:

> *The nation has as a matter of course a right to abrogate a treaty in a solemn and official manner for what she regards as a sufficient cause, just exactly as she has a right to declare war or exercise another power for a sufficient cause.*[49]

Treaties 1920-1940

Between the two world wars a huge number of treaties were concluded in Europe, many aimed at Germany, either directly, or indirectly[50].

- *Alliance between Yugoslavia and Czechoslovakia*, 14 August 1920, aimed at Hungary.[51]
- *Political Agreement between France and Poland* 19 Feb 1921.[52]
- *Secret Military Convention between France and Poland*, 21 February 1921. Mutual protection pact.[53] Aimed firstly at Germany and part of the so-called 'encirclement' or *cordon sanitaire*.
- *Alliance between Poland and Romania*, 3 March 1921, mutual military convention.[54]

- *Anglo-Soviet Trade Agreement* 16 March 1921.[55] By this, Soviet Russia secured *de facto* recognition from the world's most important capitalist state. (The USA did not afford recognition until 1933.)
- *Treaty of Riga*, 18 March 1921, settled the Russian-Polish frontier[56] following the failed Polish invasion of Russia and the subsequent Polish-Soviet War.
- *Alliance between Romania and Czechoslovakia*, 23 April 1921, aimed at Hungary.[57]
- *Alliance between Yugoslavia and Romania*, 7 June 1921, aimed at Hungary and Bulgaria.
- *Naval Limitation Treaty* was negotiated at the Washington Conference 1921-2.[58]
- *Treaty of Rapallo*, 16 April 1922. Threats and counter-threats to collect debts and enforce reparations payments brought Germany and Soviet Russia together when they concluded the 'Treaty of Rapallo' agreeing to eliminate all claims between themselves, both ways, and for Germany to formally recognize the Soviet Union and resume diplomatic relations.[59]
- *Convention between Japan and the Soviet Union*, dated at Peking, 20 January 1925.[60]
- *Treaty of Berlin*, 24 April 1926, between the Soviet Union and Germany, confirmed Rapallo as well as other 'friendly relations'.
- *Treaty of Alliance between France and Czechoslovakia*, 25th January 1924.[61] Aimed at Germany and part of the so-called *cordon sanitaire* encirclement plan.
- ***Treaty of Locarno***[62] was altogether *one treaty and four arbitration agreements* concluded on 16th October 1925, the most important being the *Treaty of Mutual Guarantee*[63] signed by Britain, France, Germany, Belgium and Italy, guaranteeing the territorial *status quo* of the established frontiers between France and Germany and Germany and Belgium. The treaty signatories mutually undertook not to invade each other or to resort to force. There was no automatic commitment to go to war by any party. The arbitration treaties, as sometimes called, between Germany, Poland and Czechoslovakia provided no guarantees and, importantly, no undertaking by Germany to accept the eastern frontiers, so that violation of those frontiers would not automatically place Germany in the wrong. Further, although Germany undertook not to resort to force from the start but to accept arbitration, the Germans made it clear at the time that this did not mean that under certain conditions force would not be employed eventually.[64]
- *Treaties of Alliance* between France, Czechoslovakia and Poland[65]. France, being unable to secure an extension of the *status quo* in the East, signed these on the same day as Locarno, but these did not fall within the multinational framework of the Locarno Treaty, and were part of France's *cordon sanitaire* encirclement of Germany.
- *Soviet-Turkish Treaty of Non-Aggression and Neutrality*, 17 December 1925. (Similar treaty with Iran, 1 Oct 1927.)
- *Soviet-Lithuania Neutrality and Non-aggression treaty*, 28 September 1926. Broken by the Soviets.
- *Treaty of Guarantee between Poland and Romania*, 26 March 1929, mutual military alliance.[66] Aimed at Hungary.
- *Treaty of Understanding between France and Yugoslavia*, 11 November 1927.[67] Part of France's *cordon sanitaire* against Germany.
- *The Pact of Paris*, better known as the *Briand-Kellogg Pact*, fifteen nations signed on 27 August 1928. Specifically, in Article 1 Britain reserved her right to act in her Empire and would not allow interference in these regions of the world. Also, the USA Foreign Relations Committee understood that by the treaty the right of self-defence was not curtailed nor the right to maintain the Monroe Doctrine.[68]
- *Conciliation Convention* between Germany and the Soviet Union, 25 January 1929.[69]
- *Protocol concluded between the Soviet Union, Estonia, Latvia, Poland and Romania* giving effect to the Pact of Paris renouncing war, 9th February 1929. Broken by the Soviets in 1939-40.
- *Naval Treaty*, signed 22 April 1930 at the London Naval Conference, added to the 1922 naval treaty. However only Britain and her Empire, the Japanese Empire and the USA signed. Italy and France declined. Japan subsequently gave notice of her withdrawal from both naval treaties.
- *Supplementary Agreement to the Treaties of Friendship and Alliance between the States of the Little Entente, 27 June 1930.*[70]
- *Non-aggression Treaty between the Soviet Union and Finland*, 21 January 1932.[71] Broken by the Soviets.
- *Soviet-Polish Non-aggression Pact, 25 July 1932.*[72] *Broken by the Soviets.*
- *Non-aggression Pact between the Soviet Union and France*, 29 November 1932.[73] Aimed at Germany.
- *Pact of Organisation of the Little Entente* 16 February 1933.[74] Aimed at Germany and Hungary.
- *Four Power Pact* between Italy, Britain, France and Germany, 7 June 1933 (never ratified).
- *Convention concluded between the Soviet Union, Afghanistan, Estonia, Latvia, Persia, Poland and Romania regarding the definition of aggression*, 3 July 1933.
- *Germany leaves the League of Nations*, 23 October, 1933, in response to the Western powers' refusal to meet its demand for full equality.
- United States of America officially recognised the Soviet Union in Nov/Dec 1933.[75]

- *Non-Aggression Declaration between Germany and Poland*. 26 January 1934.[76] Broken by Poland's mobilisation against Germany in 1939.
- *Pact of the Balkan Entente between Turkey, Greece, Romania and Yugoslavia*, 9th February 1934. Bulgaria was added on 31 July 1938.[77]
- *Rome Protocol between Italy, Austria and Hungary, 17 March 1934.*[78]
- *Baltic Entente, between Lithuania, Estonia and Latvia*, 3rd November 1934.[79]
- *Mutual Assistance Treaty between the Soviet Union and France*, 2nd May 1935.[80][81] Aimed at Germany. Broken by the Soviets.
- *Mutual Assistance Treaty between the Soviet Union and Czechoslovakia* 16 May 1935.[82] Aimed at Germany. Broken by the Soviets.
- *Anglo-German Naval Agreement*, 18 June 1935.[83]
- *Agreement between Austria and Germany*, 11 July 1936, confidential agreement on a range of crucial issues.[84]
- *Anti-Comintern Pact* agreement between Japan and Germany, 25 November 1936, opposing the Communist International.[85]
- *Nyon Agreement* between Britain, Bulgaria, Egypt, France, Greece, Romania, Turkey, U.S.S.R. and Yugoslavia, 14 September 1937. dealing with all shipping during the Spanish Civil War.[86]
- *Anti-Comintern Pact* Protocol concluded by Italy, Germany and Japan, 6 November 1937, against the Communist International.[87] Hungary also joined on 26 February 1939.
- *Munich Agreement* 29 September 1938, agreed by Britain, Germany, Italy and France, detaching the Sudetenland from Czechoslovakia, and other issues. (Followed by a 'Declaration' 30 Sept.)[88]
- *Poland annexes Teschen* 2 October 1938, a province in Czechoslovakia. On 1st November Poland also occupied some northern parts of Slovakia and received from Czecho-Slovakia Zaolzie, territories around Suchá Hora and Hladovka, around Javorina, and in addition the territory around Lesnica in the Pieniny Mountains, a small territory around Skalité and some other small border regions.
- *Federation Agreement*, 5-8 October 1938 , was implemented by the Czechoslovakian Parliament (after which the name of the state became hyphenated: Czecho-Slovakia)[89] This was short-lived.
- *First Vienna Award*, 2 November 1938, arbitrated by Germany and Italy, separated from Czecho-Slovakia a third of Slovakia in the south plus Sub-Carpathian Ruthenia which were majority Hungarian-populated, and awarded them to Hungary, which was thus recovering some of the territories Hungary had lost after World War I under the Treaty of Trianon.
- *Joint Soviet-Polish Statement* 26 November 1938 regarding the 1932 pact and extending it to the end of 1945.[90]
- *Slovakian Diet votes on and unanimously declares independence from Czecho-Slovakia, 14th March 1939, becoming the Slovak Republic.*
- *German-Slovak Treaty* signed 23 March 1939, guaranteeing Germany's protection of the newly independent republic.[91] Aimed at both the Czechs and Hungary.
- *Memel Treaty* signed 23 March 1939 when the city and Memel-land was returned to Germany by Lithuania who had illegally invaded it.
- *British Guarantee to Poland* of 31 March 1939, guaranteeing Poland's sovereignty.[92] Aimed at Germany.
- *Pact of Steel* Alliance between Germany and Italy, 22 May 1939.[93]
- *Trade Agreement between the Soviet Union and Germany* dated 19 August 1939.[94]
- *Non-aggression Treaty between the Soviet Union and Germany*, signed at Moscow, 23 August 1939; ratified by the Soviets on August 31st.[95] Broken by Germany in June 1941.
- *Agreement of Mutual Assistance between Britain and Poland*, signed at London, 25 August 1939. The *Secret Protocol* attached stated it was aimed at Germany.[96]
- *Protocol of Mutual Assistance between France and Poland*, 4 September 1939 (the day after France declared war on Germany).[97] Aimed at Germany.
- *Boundary and Friendship Treaty between the Soviet Union and Germany*, signed at Moscow, 28 September 1939.[98]
- *Second Vienna Award*, 30 August 1940, was the second of two territorial disputes that were arbitrated by Germany and Italy. It assigned the territory of northern Transylvania, including all of Maramureș and part of Crișana, to Hungary, which territories had been taken from her under the Treaty of Trianon and given to Romania. Admiral Horthy's entry into these recovered Hungarian territories was greeted with great rejoicing.
- *Non-Aggression Pact between Japanese Empire and the Soviet Union* signed at Moscow, 13 April 1941. Broken by the Soviets in 1945.
- *Alliance Treaty between Britain and the Soviet Union*, signed at London 26 May 1942.[99]

France

In the autumn of 1938, French Foreign Minister, Georges Bonnet, wisely started to advocate the ending of the French alliance system in Eastern Europe, the so-called *cordon sanitaire*, and ordered his officials at the Quai d'Orsay to start preparing grounds for renouncing the French treaties with the Soviet Union (1935) and Poland (1921). Speaking before the Foreign Affairs Commission of the Chamber of Deputies in October, Bonnet spoke of his desire to "restructure" the French alliance system in Eastern Europe and of his wish to "renegotiate" treaties that might otherwise bring France into a war "when French security is not directly threatened". In his efforts to end the eastern alliances, Bonnet however found his hands tied by opposition from some other members of the French government.

Following the declaration of independence by the Slovakian Diet, and then the rump Czech State's request to become an autonomous Protectorate of Germany, the French Parliament passed a single-clause Bill on 18/19 March 1939 conferring special plenary powers and authorising decrees for defence by the Premier and Council of Ministers, valid until the end of November.[100] The Senate vote was 26 votes for and 17 against, indicating significant unhappiness with the Bill.

An agreement was concluded in Paris on August 19th for a grant of credits amounting to 430 million francs to the Polish Government by the French Government for defence purposes. Taking account of the Rambouillet Loan[101], French financial assistance to Poland for military purposes amounted to over 3 milliard francs during the past three years.[102]

France (and Britain) desperately tried to persuade the Soviet Union to march its armies through Poland and Romania to attack Germany, but Poland refused consent. On August 19th France's Foreign Minister, Georges Bonnet, told the Minister at the British Embassy in Paris (Campbell) that if Poland disallowed this it would be "an untenable situation for Poland to take up in refusing the only immediate efficacious help that could reach them in the event of a German attack. It would place His Majesty's Government and the French Government in an almost impossible position if we had to ask our respective countries to go to war in defence of a Poland who had refused this help.....The Poles had made every mistake in their treatment of the Germans over the Danzig question which was very unwise."[103]

Huddleston wrote: "The vast majority of the French people were opposed to a war. The French had no love for Poland, widely separated from them, and the slogan "Die for Danzig?" raised further hesitancy in their mind.....The task of defeating Germany to save Poland was about the most distasteful project that could have been proposed by the British to arouse France.....the [French] Foreign Minister, Georges Bonnet, was completely opposed to hostilities.[104]

Yet Louis Marin, a former government minister and President of the Right group of the *Union Républicaine Démocratique* told the British Minister in Paris on August 26th that "the spirit of the soldiers being called up and of the whole population was excellent and entirely firm....nor were there any signs at the moment of an attempt to make French people believe that France was being dragged into war by Great Britain". An obvious lie.[105]

On 24 August 1939 France mobilised all fortress units, which involved calling to the colours of about 360,000 reservists.[106]

Revanchism

In May 1935 Hitler wrote to the Regent of Hungary, Admiral Miklos Horthy, in which letter he spoke of "the scope of the struggle of our two nations for their 'emancipation' [from the World War I treaties], and the revision of the injustices committed against them."[107]

The question of **Austria**, reduced by the Allies in 1919 to a rump State, and its internally popular union (*Anschluss*) with Germany on 12th March 1938; and the question of **Czechoslovakia**, "an artificial state"[108][109], "a structure manufactured at Versailles....an untenable situation"[110] with its minority Czech population (43%) ruling a majority of

others, including 3,500,000 Germans, were in fact extremely minor factors relating to the outbreak of war in September 1939.

Chamberlain (right) shakes hands with Mussolini after signing the Munich Agreement while Hitler and other

Politicians at the Munich Agreement Sept 1938: Mussolini shakes hands with Britain's Neville Chamberlain. France's Premier Edouard Daladier is in the background between them. Count Ciano behind Mussolini.

Under the Munich Agreement on 29 September 1938 the overwhelmingly German-populated Sudetenland was removed from **Czecho-Slovakia** by the Great Powers, and between October 1st and 10th it again became part of the Greater German Reich.

On 14 March 1939 the **Slovakian** Diet voted unanimously for and declared their independence, with Poland's Foreign Minister (Josef Beck) expressing his complete satisfaction. Worried about the Czech armed forces, two days later Slovakia requested Germany give her Protectorate status. This resulted in a Treaty of Protection, for 25 years, between Germany and Slovakia, signed in Vienna on March 18-19th and in Berlin on March 23rd.[111] Carpathian Ruthenia, which was still in Czecho-Slovakia, now appealed for independence but Hungary marched in and took possession claiming it was her right, the province being stolen from her under the Treaty of Trianon.

At the request of the Czech Government, only ruling a rump Czech State with increasing civil disorder within, the next day Germany moved into the remains of this unstable and disintegrating country which became the Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia (the pre-1919 centuries-old names as Austrian Crown Lands). (See those pages)

On March 23rd following agreements the previous day between Germany and Lithuania, **Memel** and its adjacent Memelland was returned to German sovereignty, with great rejoicing in Memel.[112][113] It had been invaded by Lithuania in 1922.

For an overwhelming majority of Germans of all political persuasions (especially those in the Sudetenland), 1938-1939 was merely revanchism.

Danzig

League of Nations High Commissioner's offices in Danzig. The city's flag is evident.

The main (but not the only) pretext for the German-Polish conflict started with the continuing disputes over the Free City of Danzig, whose overall population in 1938 was 407,000[114] of whom 98% were German, the balance being approximately 1% Kashubian and 1% Polish. It had been the capital city of West Prussia. In 1919 Polish representatives at the Peace Conference had argued that Danzig should be awarded to them as it was vital to Poland because of its harbour and access to the sea (notwithstanding that the port had always been used by Poland). This was refused. However, the city and its hinterland was then separated from Germany and made into a so-called 'Free City' under its historic Senate, with a League of Nations High Commissioner, but at the same time awarding oppressive conditions and 'rights' in the Free City to Poland in the Treaty of Versailles. From the outset Poland caused as much difficulty as humanly possible and this continued until 1st September 1939.[115][116]

Poland, peeved at not being given sovereignty at Danzig, almost immediately began construction, using a Franco-Polish consortium, of an entirely new port at the small fishing village of Gdynia at enormous expense, some $28,000,000 US dollars, between 1920 and 1935.[117] Danzig's Senate protested to the League of Nations that this was a blatant violation of treaty obligations to make use of their port. The Poles pressed on with French loans to enable

them to construct new railway connexions again at enormous cost, with Gdynia, bypassing Danzig, with the formerly German Upper Silesian coalfields. By 1926 there was lively traffic in the new port and by 1930 it was well-established, with a new-town population of 30,000.(By 1939 this was 100,000). Each year from 1924 shipping was being diverted by Poland to Gdynia from Danzig causing grave anxieties in the Free City. By 1933 Gdynia's annual traffic surpassed that of Danzig. Poland had ignored her legal obligations. The League of Nations set up a Commission of Experts to consider the matter which found that Poland was not entitled to benefit Gdynia to the injury of Danzig. Poland simply ignored the League.[118] Using her various 'rights' at Danzig, Poland "threatened economic disaster for the old Hanseatic city."[119]

Inauguration of the new Danzig bridge at Rotebude with a banner that reads: "Danzig is a German city and wants to belong to Germany", 20 August 1939.

On 18 October 1937 the German Foreign Minister, Baron von Neurath, told Polish Ambassador Josef Lipski that the only way forward would be the restoration of the entirely German city of Danzig to its natural position within the Reich, with considerations for the protection of Poland's economic interests at the port.[120]

On 26 March 1939 the German Minster of Foreign affairs (now von Ribbentrop) once again placed the German proposals regarding Danzig and the Polish Corridor in the hands of Lipski, the Polish Ambassador in Berlin, who stated the following month that Poland was prepared to negotiate but would not accept any unilateral decision, would regard any internal move on the part of the Danzig Senate as very serious, and any German military movement in their support as an act of aggression. Subsequently Polish Foreign Minister Josef Beck's *Chef de Cabinet* told the British Embassy in Warsaw that he could not say what concessions Poland could make over the Free City of Danzig, but declared that the claims advanced in the German Press for the return of the Free City and a road across the Corridor were "inadmissible". On April 23 Beck told the British Ambassador in Warsaw that Poland would not consider annexation of Danzig to Germany [notwithstanding that Poland did not possess sovereignty over the Free City] but were prepared to discuss a modification of the Free City's Statute, laid down at Versailles, which would then need to be ratified by the League of Nations who held the sovereignty.[121]

Public opinion in Britain was opposed to any British action over Danzig. Writing in the *Church of England Newspaper* W.Ralph Inge, Dean of St. Paul's Cathedral in London, wrote:

> *Versailles has to be revised....are we going to fight about Danzig, a thoroughly German city, which never ought to have been separated from the Reich?*.

The London *Times* newspaper (12 July 1939) carried a leader which stated:

> *British interests are not the least involved in this issue, and in neither Great Britain nor France could it possibly be a popular battle-cry to 'fight for Danzig'...*

The famous and popular author, H. G. Wells wrote:

> *The most disastrous of all the follies of Versailles was the creation of the Free City of Danzig and what was called the Polish Corridor.*[122]

On 15 August 1939 Britain's Viscount Halifax telegraphed the British Ambassador in Warsaw, Sir Howard Kennard:

> *The Polish Government would in my judgement do well to examine the possibility of negotiation over Danzig. I regard such an attitude as important from the point of view of world opinion.*[123]

On 19 August 1939 French Foreign Minister Georges Bonnet stated:

> *The Poles have made every mistake in their treatment of the Germans over the Danzig question which was very unwise.*[124]

Poland

> *Poland is not a grievance of Hitler's making, but a German grievance...* ~ Sir Neville Henderson, British Ambassador to Berlin.[125]

Polish poster showing their fantastic expansionist proposals in 1939.

Great anger and resentment was caused in Germany by the territorial losses in eastern Germany[126], and the demonstrable French sympathy towards the re-established Poland and her open terrorism in Upper Silesia[127][128][129][130], (almost a mirror of the terrorist situation in Ireland).

In addition, Poland ignored the Minorities Treaty they were party to at Versailles and proceeded almost immediately to persecute the German population who as a result of Versailles' dismemberment of Germany in the east suddenly found themselves living under an alien government. This oppression, and often State Theft/expropriation of property, carried on with a steady flow of refugees into Germany proper until the outbreak of war.[131][132][133] In **1930** the British *Manchester Guardian* reported: "The minorities in Poland should disappear.....This policy is driven forward recklessly and without the slightest regard to the world's public opinion, to international treaties or to the alliance of nations. Galicia has become an inferno under Polish rule [the mandate]....The goal of Polish politics is the disappearance of national minorities, on paper and in reality.[134]

In a *Memorandum* to the Foreign Ministry in Berlin, as early as **11 June 1926**, Ulrich Rauscher, Germany's Ambassador in Warsaw (1922-1930) found his experience in Poland led him to recognize the futility of Weimar's plans for their doctrinaire revisionism.

> *"The Corridor will return to the Reich only in consequence of a war and the concomitant political convulsions in Poland, never as an outcome of even the most logical and convincing economic ideas."*

After **1930** revisionism seriously clouded Germany's relations with the western powers. Between Locarno and the Great Depression Germany had found sympathy for her claims abroad and, encouraged at this response, had intensified her propaganda. In Geneva the barrage of complaints to the League of Nations from the Danzig Senate, and the very significant German minority in Poland, caused headaches.[135] German-Polish relations subsequently deteriorated after 1930 into overt provocations and rumours of war.[136] Writing in his book *The Shape of Things to Come* (**1933**), H. G. Wells stated on the restoration of the new Poland that

> *"instead of a fine, spirited and generous people there appeared a narrowly patriotic government which developed into an aggressive, vindictive and pitiless dictatorship."*[137]

On **17 February 1933** the Polish Minister at Berlin (Alfred Wysocki) told the Director of Dept.IV at the German Foreign Office (Richard Meyer) that "the Polish people were of one mind that they would rather let themselves be killed than retreat one foot from the present borders". Meyer responded by saying that "there was no German Government and no party in Germany, from the Communists to the National Socialists, which recognized as justified

the borders forced upon Germany by the Treaty of Versailles *diktat*". Meyer then related "at considerable length the discrimination against the Germany minority in Poland, mentioning the complaints about the schools, agrarian 'reform', etc., the Polish press's hostility to Germans, and how the Polish State violated the rights of the Free City of Danzig, ignoring the decisions of the League of Nations Council."[138] It is worth pointing out this was before any National Socialist government reached office.

The French Ambassador in Warsaw (Jules Laroche) also stated in **February 1933** that the eastern borders as fixed at Versailles would lead to friction and lasting enmity between Germany and Poland. "It was clear to anyone who took a map in his hands that the Corridor was not tenable in the long run. It was also in the interest of Poland to reach a *rapprochement* with Germany, and that that was not possible without eliminating the Corridor." He had spoken about this repeatedly at the Quai d'Orsay [French Foreign Office in Paris]. He felt the Poles had a fear of matters relating to the Corridor "bordering on psychosis"..... that all Poles who breached this subject to him had always expressed their view in agreement with the present official lines *hammered into the whole population by intensive propaganda, that territorial negotiations were out of the question*." He put forward suggested proposals to alleviate the situation in the Corridor.[139]

On **March 6th** Poland increased its garrison at their illegal base at Danzig's Westerplatte to 200 men. This was a clear and serious breach of the League of Nations decision (9 Dec 1925) that they could maintain a maximum of 88 men there to protect munitions stores in transit there. This was termed by the League as an *action directe*. The League's High Commissioner at Danzig demanded an "immediate withdrawal" and a written response to his Complaint. The Polish representative in Danzig reproached Commissioner Rosting for his "attitude". The matter was sent to the League for their deliberations. Throughout 1933 there continued the same levels [since 1920] of complaints by Danzig to the League of Nations over Poland's abuses of their so-called "rights" at Danzig, with the usual counter-claims by Poland, often sheer inventions.[140]

In **July 1934**, Poland declared to the Assembly of the League of Nations that she no longer recognised the right of the League to concern itself with minority questions in Poland - a virtual denunciation of the Versailles Minorities Treaty which Poland had signed.[141]

On **24th March 1939**, Poland ordered and commenced partial mobilization. [Mobilization is generally considered a *de facto* declaration of war.]

On the same day General Martin von Janson, German Consul in Danzig, reported that Poland had withdrawn 300 goods wagons, 20 passenger coaches and 16 locomotives from the Free City territory into Poland [the Treaty of Versailles awarded the Poles control of the Free City railways]. They had also withdrawn empty rolling stock from Gydnia; the bridge over the Vistula at Dirschau had new machine-gun posts protected by sandbags mounted upon it; in Thorn reservists of the 1912-16 age group had been called up and transferred to Bromberg; a general cancellation of leave has been ordered in the local garrisons; in widely different districts of the Corridor, horses and taxicabs had been requisitioned by the military authorities. On 11 April 1939 the German *Abwehr* reported that

> *"Poland is safeguarding the crucial area of the Corridor against any surprise attacks, by maintaining troops on the frontier in a continuous state of alert."*[142]

On **August 10th** the Soviet Chargé d'Affairs (Astakhov) in Berlin called upon Julius Schnurre at the German Foreign Office[143] The conversation gradually moved to Poland, when Schnurre stated "the Polish delusion of grandeur, shielded by Britain, drove Poland to new provocations [although] we were still hoping that Poland would somehow come to reason so that a peaceful solution could be found." They then discussed the position of Moscow on the Polish Question. Schnuree said that Germany "could scarcely believe that the Soviet Government would align themselves with

Britain and make themselves, like Britain, guarantors of megalomanic Polish aspirations." Astakhov said negotiations with Britain might come to nothing, and sought to learn whether any German decisions in the Polish Question could be expected in the next few days and what Germany proposed to do.[144]

Unrest

On **25 September 1938** Sir Howard Kennard, British Ambassador at Warsaw telegraphed London:

> *There were anti-German demonstrations in The Corridor yesterday.*[145]

From **25 February to 3 March 1939** Count Ciano, Italy's Foreign Minister visited Poland for talks. He found that "anti-German demonstrations had been breaking out here and there in all Polish cities over the Danzig question". [Only 1% of Danzig's 407,000 population was Polish.] Ciano wrote that Poland's Foreign Minister, Colonel Beck, was "fundamentally and constitutionally anti-German". "I do not fail to point out to the Polish authorities that anti-German demonstrations put me in an embarrassing situation."[146]

In February two major anti-German demonstrations took place in front of the German Embassy in Warsaw and on the 28th were reportedly taking place "all over Poland" stirred up by agitation in the Polish Press, where every day hostile articles appeared. A formal complaint was lodged with the Poles about their volatile and aggressive *Western Association* which had an agenda and planned programme to stir up the people against everything German. An informant reported that a high-ranking Polish Police Officer had described the demonstrations as "completely justified".[147]

The German Ambassador at Warsaw (von Moltke) telegraphed the Berlin Foreign Ministry on **March 17th** that there were "renewed anti-German street demonstrations".[148]

Just prior to **27 March 1939** there were anti-German demonstrations by the Polish 'Western League' in Bromberg, including the beating and maltreatment of German women and children. The Polish Ambassador in Berlin (Lipski) was called to the German Foreign Office to receive a protest about these "excesses" and "outrages". He replied that he "deplored" these events but gave the excuse that they were due to "the nervous tension at present prevailing in Poland".[149]

In **July** The British Ambassador at Warsaw[150] had drawn to the attention of the Polish Vice-Minister for Foreign Affairs the "wholesale closing down of German dairies throughout the country." Whilst Arciszewski said that after investigation many (but not all) of these dairies had now been re-opened, "in the cases where the dairies had exclusively German management and German employes they had been converted into mixed Polish and German organisations upon the insistance of the military authorities."[151] This meant loss of livelihood for the German employees. What a dairy had to do with the military is anyone's guess.

On **August 12th** Senator Hasbach, a member of the Polish Senate and leading representative of the German national group in Poland, attempted to have a conversation with Ministerial-Director Zyborski in the Polish Ministry of the Interior, in which the Senator said he wished to discuss the complaints of the present oppression and persecution of the Germans in Poland. Zyborski, however, refused to enter into any discussion on this subject, instead expounding upon wild conspiracy theories held by the Poles about Germany and Russia. Hasbach said these were absurd. Zyborski continued that it was "self-evident that any desires that the Germans in Poland might have could not be discussed in any way."[152]

In a letter dated **August 16th** to Viscount Halifax, Sir Neville Henderson, British Ambassador in Berlin, said "In the meantime they [Poland] could undertake to control their Press.....and put an abrupt and final stop to the persecution of Germans which goes on in the Provinces."[153]

On **August 18th** the Polish Government published a new Decree applying to large estates in the western frontier zones. Many of the estates affected were German-owned and though the Decree was said to be non-discriminatory, it was being hinted by the P.A.T., the official Polish news agency, that it would in fact operate to expropriate German estates. This decree was apparently initiated by Poland's Ministers of Agriculture, and Finance.[154]

Failed diplomacy

Following the installation by elections of the new National Socialist Government on 30 January 1933, the Foreign Ministry telegraphed embassies abroad stating that "any apprehensions regarding future German foreign policy should be met by reference to the Foreign Minister (Baron von Neurath), who has been a member of the last two Cabinets and who has the confidence of the President to conduct foreign policy. Continuity of policies is guaranteed."[155] This was a clear demonstration that the German foreign policies pre-dated the National Socialists.

Hitler, who had respected the former Polish leader, Josef Pilsudski, and who said he did not want war with Poland, had continued previous German Chancellors' attempts to negotiate border revisions and for Danzig's return to Germany.[156] In **1934** the two statesmen concluded a non-aggression pact and it was clearly understood that all problems, including those of Danzig and the Corridor, would be solved by direct negotiations within the framework of that instrument.[157][158][159]

In **February 1933** Jules Larouche, French Ambassador to Poland, who had worked on various sub-committees during the Versailles peace deliberations, claimed that he had nothing to do with fixing the eastern border of Germany and he had foreseen that only friction and lasting enmity between Germany and Poland would result from the 'Corridor'. He regarded it as incompatible with the modern concept of State territory, said it was in the interests of Poland to reach a *rapprochement* with Germany, and he understood that was not possible without eliminating the Corridor. He had repeatedly said this at the French Foreign Office in the Quai d'Orsay in Paris. He also said that "there existed a fear bordering on psychosis" in Poland about any negotiations concerning it, adding that "all Poles who had broached this subject to him had always expressed the view in agreement with the present official position, 'hammered into the whole population by intensive propaganda', that territorial negotiations were out of the question."[160]

Hans-Adolf von Moltke[161], the German Ambassador to Poland, [162]said: "in **May 1935** the question arose as to what attitude Poland would take toward the proposed construction of an *Autobahn* through the Corridor between East Prussia and other territory of the Reich. I discussed this with Polish Foreign Minister Beck who promised me the question would be studied. Despite repeated reminders since he has never given a clear answer, a sure sign of a negative attitude on the part of his Government". In September that year Fritz Todt, General Inspector for Roads in Germany, was in Warsaw for the Polish exhibition on road construction when he spoke with the Deputy Minister in Poland's Ministry of Transportation, M.Piasecki, suggesting that experts from both sides have a conference on this subject. Nothing came of this due to "Polish negativity".[163]

The issues were raised again on **24 October 1938** when the German Foreign Minister set down an outline four-step proposal to the Polish Ambassador, Lipski, "to eliminate all sources of friction between the two countries". The issues were discussed at least four times between the two governments before **March 1939**, including a meeting between Hitler and Poland's Foreign Minister, Josef Beck, on **5 January 1939**, without any progress at all. On a state visit to Warsaw (**23-27 January 1939**) the German Foreign Minister again tabled proposals for a final all-inclusive settlement of the Polish-German boundaries.[164] From January through to March 1939, Hitler approached the Polish government several times with diplomatic overtures, seeking to resolve "the Danzig question" by negotiation. He outlined the proposals in a speech on **April 28**, including allowing Poland to retain the economic concessions in Danzig it had been awarded under Versailles in 1919, and also proposed joining Germany in an alliance against the Soviet Union. In return an autonomous Danzig would return to the Reich, and Germany would be permitted to erect an extra-territorial railway and autobahn across the so-called Polish Corridor to East Prussia. The Polish Government rejected this latest offer and their response was to begin partial mobilisation, from **25 March 1939**.

On **August 26th** the Italian Ambassador in Paris had an audience with Georges Bonnet, France's Foreign Minister. Guariglia made it prophetically clear to Bonnet that in Italy's view it would be suicide for France, on behalf of Poland, to enter a war against Germany. Poland would be the first victim and would disappear from the map. Bonnet replied that the French Government was exerting the strongest influence on Poland to refrain from any provocative action against Germany. The Italian Ambassador subsequently told the German *Charge d'Affaires* in Paris that the Italian Military Attaché there, General Visconti Prasca, had learnt from the French General Staff that they, too, were exerting strong pressure on Polish military circles to give no cause for a conflict to break out. (Provovation comes in many forms, of course.) The following day the French Government published a *Decree* with clearly defined no-fly zones over France.[165]

Germany spent the inter-war years and particularly from 1933 onwards attempting to get Poland to the negotiating table without success. The intransigence of the Poles was solidified following the British 'guarantee' to Poland in March 1939. Despite the diplomatic efforts by all the major powers, and Sweden, the Poles refused to negotiate. It became clear that war would come.

On **August 31st** the Soviet Union ratified the new Soviet-German Non-Aggression Pact.[166]

Britain's Lord Halifax Minuted on **August 31st**: [Italy's] "Count Ciano rang me up at 12.50 p.m. today to say that he had a new proposal of Signor Mussolini's. This proposal was made by him personally and so far the German Government had not been informed of it. The proposal was as follows: A conference should be called for September 5th for the revision of the clauses of the Treaty of Versailles which are the cause of the present grave troubles in the life of Europe. Count Ciano said that he had made this proposal to the French Government through their Ambassador in Rome. If Great Britain and France would accept the idea the *Duce* would invite Herr Hitler to agree also. But before doing this he wished to know whether Britain and France would accept the idea of a conference. Count Ciano begged for a very early answer as the situation was growing more and more serious every hour."[167]

On 2 September 1939, Sir John Simon, Britain's Chancellor of the Exchequer, led a deputation of ministers to see Neville Chamberlain to insist Britain honoured her guarantee to Poland and go to war if Hitler did not withdraw. Simon subsequently became a member of the small 'War Cabinet'.

British Guarantee to Poland

The German Ambassador in London (von Dirksen) reported to the Berlin Foreign Office on **18 March 1939** that the Eden-Churchill 'party' "has gained considerably in influence. [However] as long as Chamberlain is at the helm, a relatively moderate course is assured."[168] This was clearly an error of judgement.

In an exceptionally provocative speech, Polish Marshal Edward Śmigły-Rydz declares Hitler an enemy of the State, at Kraków, **6th August 1939**.

German Secretary of State at the Foreign Office, Baron von Weizsacker, issued a *Circular* on **21 March 1939** in which he stated: "According to information to hand here, the British Government have undertaken *démarches* in a number of capitals so as to bring about an association of 'peaceful Powers' against Germany. In particular they are said to have approached all the States adjacent to Romania and to several other Powers in order to ascertain how far these are prepared to take measures against an attack on Romania.....The Soviet Union has replied by proposing a conference to which they, Britain, France, Poland, Romania and other Balkan States would be invited."[169] Ernst Woermann, Director of the Political Dept., and Under Secretary of State in the German Foreign Ministry, on the same day, described German aggressive intentions against Romania as "pure invention".[170]

Any further negotiations were permanently derailed when 10 days later, on **31 March 1939**, Britain "mistakenly"[171] gave Poland an *unsolicited* guarantee of Poland's independence and promise of support if attacked (despite Austen Chamberlain's remark about the Polish Corridor "for which no British Government ever will or ever can risk the bones of a single British grenadier"[172]) On March 31st the British Prime Minister, Neville Chamberlain, addressed the House of Commons in London saying:

> *His Majesty's Government has constantly advocated the [border] adjustments by way of free negotiation between the parties concerned of any differences that may arise between them. In our opinion there should be no question incapable of solution by peaceful means.....I now have to inform the House that in the event of any action which clearly threatened Polish independence, and which the Polish Government accordingly considered it vital to resist with their national forces, H M Government would feel themselves bound at once to lend the Polish Government all support in their power. I may add that the French Government have authorized me to make it plain that they stand in the same position in this matter as us.*

The German *Charge d'Affaires* in London telegraphed Berlin in the afternoon to say he had been told that Chamberlain's statement had been written by former British Foreign Secretary Sir John Simon[173]; and that the British Foreign Office wished to point out that this statement in no way represented a preliminary step towards a policy of encirclement of Germany [which policy, in any case, was in full force by the French].[174]

This 'blank cheque' had the effect of deterring Poland from any further negotiations with Germany (Josef Beck told Lord Halifax "no negotiations were proceeding" with Germany[175]), convincing its leadership that it no longer had to negotiate over anything, including Danzig. It emboldened the Poles.[176] The British Ambassador at Berlin telegraphed Viscount Halifax on **3 May 1939** about "the ravings of the Warsaw and Cracow Press demanding a Polish Protectorate over Danzig, a broader access to the Baltic for Poland, and the cession of Silesia and East Prussia to Poland." He added that "the 'blank cheque' given by England to Poland is deemed to be principally responsible for this outbreak of megalomania and a large part of the blame should be laid at the doors of the new Protectors of Poland [Britain] for failing to check this inflammable mischief-making, and for allowing the British and French press to add fuel to the flames".[177]

The Polish Foreign Minister, Beck, "with his usual 'great power arrogance'"[178], and his military "were [now] convinced that Poland could withstand a German attack".[179] Even the British Ambassador in Warsaw (Kennard) told the London Foreign Office that Poles "have an exaggerated idea of their military ability."[180] and Taylor refers several times to the Poles imagining themselves as a 'Great Power'.[181] Poland began partial mobilisation on **March 25th**, which continued throughout the summer[182], and even requested "a British loan to Poland for Military purposes" on **23 April 1939**.

A British Foreign Office *Memorandum*[183] dated **May 4**, stated:

> *the Poles have all along shown a remarkable disinclination to tell us the truth [regarding the German proposals]. It may be useful to point out that at the time of the announcement of our [British] guarantee to Poland on March 31, our information about the proposals was based on what M. Arciszewski*[184] *had told Sir Howard Kennard*[185] *on March 29. We thus merely knew that within the past fortnight the German Government had communicated* desiderata *regarding the return of Danzig, a motor road across the Corridor, and co-operation against Russia. We had no knowledge of the concessions which had accompanied the* desiderata. *We had no positive knowledge of the Polish reply.*[186]

On **August 9th** German Secretary-of-State Baron von Weizacker delivered a formal Protest Note to the Polish Chargé d'Affaires in Berlin, Prince Lubomirski, over the Polish Government's *Note* which was an ultimatum with threats of reprisals to the Senate of the Free City of Danzig. The Under-Secretary of State in the Polish Foreign Ministry (Arciszewski) responded the following day to the German Embassy in Warsaw, saying "they had noted with extreme

surprise" the Protest, and basically stated that it was none of Germany's business, and that Poland would continue to stand up for its "rights and interests" at Danzig, and "that it will regard any interventions by the German Government to the detriment of these rights and interests as an act of aggression."[187]

On **August 16th** while discussing the Polish Question Secretary of State at the German Foreign Office, Baron von Weizacker, told British Ambassador Sir Neville Henderson that there would be "terrible losses which the Poles would suffer in a war in which they were no match for the Germans." Henderson remarked in a letter following this interview that "it is clear this is what all the Germans think."[188]

In a telegram to the British Minister of Foreign Affairs, Viscount Halifax, on **August 18th**, the British Ambassador (Henderson) at Berlin, stated that "direct contact between Poland and Germany has unfortunately ceased for the past four months"[189] [i.e: since the British guarantee to Poland.]

In a "Note of Reply" to the British Ambassador dated **August 23rd**, the German Chancellor said:

> *Poland has been guilty of numerous breaches of her legal obligations towards the Free City of Danzig, has made demands in the character of "ultimata", and has initiated a process of economic strangulation. The Government of the German Reich therefore recently caused the Polish Government to be informed that it was not prepared passively to accept this development of affairs, that it will not tolerate further addressing of Notes in the character of "ultimata" to Danzig, or the extermination of the Free City of Danzig by economic measures, the destruction of the vital basis of the population of Danzig, by a kind of Customs blockade; it will not tolerate a continuance of the persecutions of the German minority [in Poland] and that it will not tolerate the occurrence of further acts of provocation directed against the Reich. The questions of the Corridor and of Danzig must and shall be solved.*[190]

On **August 24th** the British and Polish governments converted the unilateral guarantee of support made by the British government in March into a **mutual assistance pact**, the Poles authorizing their ambassador in London to negotiate and sign it. Just three days later the Polish Government decided on "full mobilization to take place at once!".[191] There were now rumours of an imminent Polish attack on Danzig, due to the new Polish blockade of the Free City, plus mobilisation. This related to the Polish Government sealing the Polish-Danzig frontier. Lord Halifax telegraphed Warsaw that this was just aggravating the situation.[192]

The British Ambassador at Warsaw (Kennard) told the Polish Minister for Foreign Affairs (Josef Beck) on **August 29th**, "in the strongest possible terms, the serious effects which general mobilisation of the Polish Army might have on the final efforts which His Majesty's Government are making to preserve Europe. The Germans might seize on this as an example of provocation on the part of Poland." The French Ambassador at Warsaw was told by Paris that "the announcement of such a measure would be most inopportune."[193]

The British Ambassador at Berlin called upon the Polish Ambassador (Lipski), in the company of the Swedish diplomat Birger Dahlerus, on the morning of **August 31st**. Henderson reported the conversation to the British Foreign Office at 12:20 p.m. with these remarks:

> *I understand from the Italian Ambassador that Signor Mussolini has suggested the immediate return of the Free City of Danzig to Germany pending peace negotiations on all other points. But the absolutely essential thing is that the Polish Ambassador here should not lose a minute in getting into touch with the German Government. Consequences may be immense if he does not, even if it is only to gain time. I understand the Polish Government is still hesitating to give him instructions in view of 'procedure'. Can 'procedure' be allowed to stand in the way at such a moment? I can only suggest that the Polish Government be insistently told to give their Ambassador here immediate instructions, at least to ask the German Government for [a new] text of the [latest] German proposals for urgent communication to Warsaw with a view to the despatch of a plenipotentiary [previously already requested by the German Government]. The [German] terms sound moderate to me and are certainly only so in view of Germany's desire for good relations with Great Britain.*

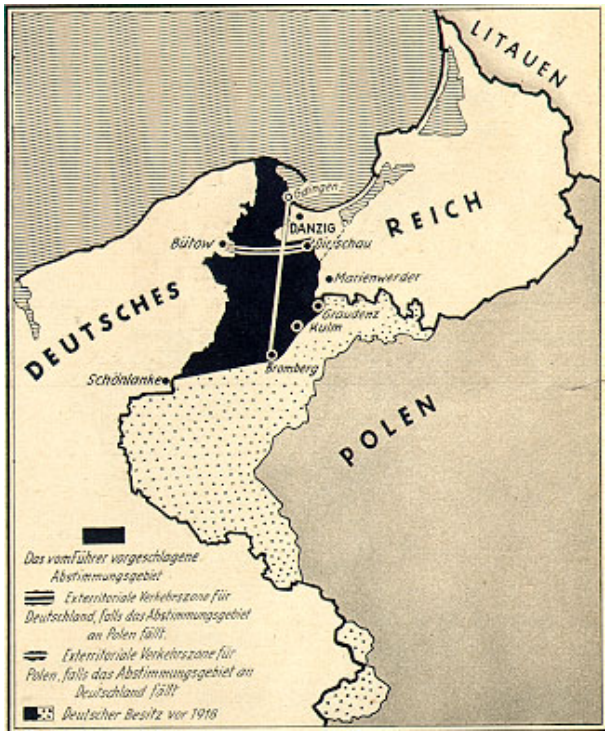
> *This is no Munich since we are behind Poland who will never get such good terms again, guaranteed as they will be internationally.*[194]

It becomes clear that Poland was seeking a war as they refused their Berlin Ambassador (Lipski) all negotiating powers as requested by the German government and they also refused to send someone else with diplomatic authority to negotiate. Yet on August 24th Poland had authorized their London ambassador to fully negotiate and even sign off a new mutual assistance treaty with Britain.

Settlement Proposal

> See: West Prussia
> See: Polish Corridor

"The Polish-German controversy concerning the Corridor, Upper Silesia and Danzig, began with the Versailles Treaty in 1919 and never ceased to agitate Europe. For many years intelligent commentators and Statesmen of all nations, including Great Britain, agreed that the separation of East Prussia from Germany proper and, indeed, the whole 'Polish settlement' was unjust and fraught with danger."[195] The issues and settlement proposals were taken up with the Polish Government on a continuous basis from 1919, but treated with disdain by them.



German proposals for extra-territorial access.

The German Government had for twenty years made proposals to Poland to settle the Free City of Danzig and the Polish Corridor problems. Their Final Proposal as well as the question concerning the German and Polish minorities (all of which were created by the 1919 Treaty of Versailles – which treaty was formerly denounced and publicly repudiated by the German Government on 30 January 1937)[196] was:

"In putting forward these proposals the German Government are attempting to find a final solution putting an end to the intolerable situation arising from the present demarcation of frontiers, securing for both parties their vital lines of communication, eliminating as far as possible the problem of the minorities and, in so far as this should prove impossible rendering the fate of the minorities bearable by effectively guaranteeing their rights.

The German Government feel convinced that it is indispensable that economic and personal damage inflicted since 1918 should be investigated and full compensation made thereof. Of course, the German Government regard this obligation as binding upon both parties.

The above considerations give rise to the following concrete proposals:

(1) By reason of its purely German character and the unanimous will of its population, the Free City of Danzig shall be returned forthwith to the German State.

(2) The territory known as the Polish Corridor, that is to say, the territory bounded by the Baltic sea and a line running from Marienwerder to Graudenz, Kulm, Bromberg (including those towns), and then in a westerly direction towards Schönlanke, shall itself decide whether it shall become part of Germany or remain with Poland.

(3) For that purpose, a plebiscite shall be held in this territory. All Germans who were domiciled in this area on the first day of January 1918 or who were born there on or before that day, also all Poles, Kashubians, etc., who were domiciled in this area on that day or who were born there on or before the above-mentioned date, shall be entitled to vote. Germans who have been expelled from this territory shall [be able to] return for the purpose of registering their votes.

In order to ensure an impartial plebiscite and to guarantee that the necessary and extensive preparations for the plebiscite shall be carried out correctly, an International Commission like the one formed in connection with the Saar plebiscite, and consisting of members appointed by the four Great Powers, Italy, the U.S.S.R., France and Great Britain, shall be formed immediately, and placed in charge of this territory. To that end, the territory shall be evacuated by the Polish military forces, by the Polish police and by the Polish authorities within the shortest possible time to be agreed upon.

(4) The Polish port of Gydnia to the extent of the Polish settlement is not included in this area but, as a matter of principle, is recognised as Polish territory. The details of the boundaries of this Polish port shall be decided on by Germany and Poland, and if necessary established by an international court of arbitration.

(5) In order to allow for ample time for the necessary and extensive preparations for the carrying out of an impartial plebiscite, this plebiscite shall not take place before a period of twelve months has elapsed.

(6) In order that during that period, Germany's lines of communication with East Prussia and Poland's access to the sea may be unrestrictedly ensured, certain roads and railway lines shall be determined, in order to facilitate unobstructed transit. In this connection only such taxes may be levied as are necessary for the upkeep of the lines of communication and for the carrying out of transport.

(7) The allocation of this territory shall be decided on by the absolute majority of the votes cast.

(8) In order to secure, after the plebiscite (irrespective of the result thereof), Germany's unrestricted communication with the province of Danzig-East Prussia, and Poland's access to the sea, Germany shall, should the territory be retained by Poland as a result of the plebiscite, be given an extraterritorial traffic zone running, from say, Butow to Danzig or Dirschau, for the purpose of building a State Motor Road (Reichsautobahn) and also a four-track railway line. The construction of the motor road and of the railway shall be carried out in such a manner that Polish lines of communication are not affected thereby, i.e: they are to be overbridged or underbridged. This zone shall be one kilometre in width and shall be German territory. Should the result of the plebiscite be in favour of Germany, Poland shall have the same rights as Germany would have had, to build an extraterritorial road and railway connection in order to secure her free and unrestricted access to her new port of Gydnia.

(9) In the event of the so-called Polish Corridor being returned to Germany, the latter declares herself prepared to arrange with Poland for an exchange of population to the extent to which this could be carried out according to the conditions in the corridor.

(10) Any special rights claimed by Poland within the port of Danzig shall, on the basis of parity, be negotiated in exchange of equal rights for Germany at the port of Gydnia.

(11) In order to avoid any sense of menace or danger on either side, Danzig and Gydnia henceforth shall have a purely commercial character, i.e: neither of these places shall be provided with means of military defence or fortifications.

(12) The Peninsular of Hela, which according to the result of the plebiscite would be allocated either to Poland or to Germany, shall also be demilitarized in any case.

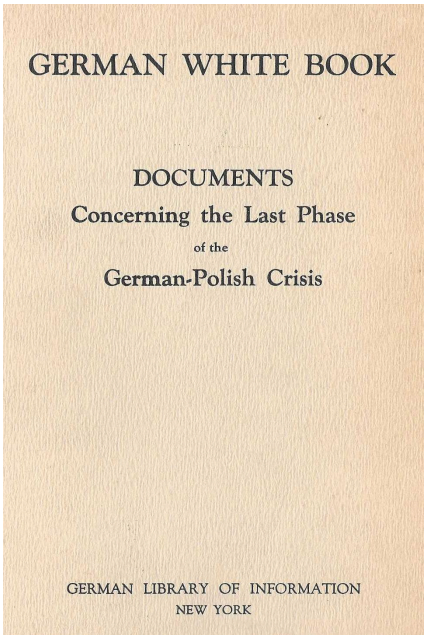
(13) The German Government having most serious complaints to make about the treatment of the minority by the Poles, the Polish Government on the other hand considering themselves entitled to raise complaints against Germany, both parties agree to submit these complaints to an International Commission of Investigation charged to investigate

into all complaints about economic and personal damage, as well as other acts of terrorism. Germany and Poland bind themselves to indemnify the minorities on either side for any economic damages and other wrongs inflicted upon them since 1918; and or to revoke all expropriations or otherwise to completely indemnify the respective person or persons for these and other encroachments upon economic life.

Josef Lipski, Poland's powerless Ambassador in Berlin. His government refused to permit him to negotiate or even discuss the German proposals.[197]

(14) In order to free the Germans remaining in Poland, as well as the Poles remaining in Germany, from the feeling of being deprived of the benefits of International Law, and above all to afford them the certainty of their not being made to take part in actions and in furnishing services of a kind incompatible with their national convictions, German and Poland mutually agree to safeguard the rights of their respective minorities by the most comprehensive and binding agreements for the purpose of warranting these minorities the preservation, free development and cultivation of their national customs, habits and traditions, to grant them in particular and for that purpose the form of organisation considered necessary by them. Both parties undertake not to draft the members of the minority into military service.

(15) In case of an agreement on the basis of these proposals being reached, Germany and Poland declare themselves prepared immediately to order and carry through the demobilisation of their respective armed forces.



(16) Any additional measure required to hasten the carrying through of the above agreement shall be mutually agreed upon between German and Poland." *finis*

In addition, at 9.15 p.m. on **August 30th** the German Foreign Minister's Secretariat, telegraphed the Chargé d'Affairs at the German Embassies in London and Paris the full details of the German 'Proposals for a Settlement of the Danzig-Corridor Problem as well as the German-Polish Minorities Question'.[198]

These proposals were also conveyed to the British and Polish Ambassadors in Berlin for the attention of their governments, as well as being broadcast. They were ignored by Poland. No delegate or plenipotentiary from the Polish Government ever arrived to even discuss them and the Polish Ambassador in Berlin, Lipski, was "not authorised to enter upon any discussion whatsoever, much less to negotiate". Lipski had nevertheless told Swedish diplomat Johan Birger Dahlerus that the proposals were **"out of the question"** and that no-one was coming to discuss them. In telling the British Foreign Office this on **August 31st** by telephone Dahlerus[199] added that "the Poles do not intend to give way and it was obvious that they are obstructing the possibilities of negotiation."[200]

In a telegram from Sir Neville Henderson, British Ambassador at Berlin, to Viscount Halifax on the evening of **August 31**, he put forward the German Government's position including "The Reich Government cannot be expected for their part continually not only to emphasise their willingness to start negotiations, but actually to be ready to do so, while being from the Polish side merely put off with empty subterfuges and meaningless declarations....It has once more been made clear as a result of a *démarche* which has meanwhile been made by the Polish Ambassador that the latter himself has no plenary powers either to enter into any discussion, or even to negotiate...two days have passed and the German Government have waited in vain for the arrival of a Polish negotiator."[201]

In an outspoken announcement made by the Polish Broadcasting Service at Warsaw on **August 31st** they poured scorn on the proposals as "undisguised aggressive intentions of Germany towards Poland", scoffed that "Germany has waited in vain for a Polish delegate", and stated that the [full mobilisation] orders issued by the Polish Government to their military were justified [notwithstanding that mobilisations are generally accepted as a *de facto* declaration of war].

The German case is set forth in their *White Book* documents[202], including some of the above, which were exchanged during August 1939. The opening summary includes the chronology of proposals for the Polish Corridor and Danzig made by National Socialist Germany diplomatically from **1934** onwards. These proposals, and adjustments to the Versailles *diktat*, were refused by Poland.

U.S.A influences

Dr Hans Dieckhof, Germany's Ambassador in the United States, reported on **14 November 1938** "a great section of the American Press has long been attacking Germany in the most spiteful and bitter manner, and this campaign has embraced comparatively wide circles. The Jewish newspapers write still more excitedly than before, and the Roman Catholic Bishops' campaign against Germany is still waged more bitterly than before....that the Europeans, since Munich, are on the threshold of jointly building a new peaceful Europe is reduced *ad absurdum* or at any rate largely discredited. In the general atmosphere of hate the idea of boycotting German goods has received a new fillip." [Exports from Germany to the USA fell from 991 million Reichsmarks in 1929 to just 209 million in 1937.] The following day the American Embassy in Berlin complained to the Foreign Ministry of "damage to certain [Jewish] American business properties in Germany which occurred in the course of recent anti-Jewish manifestations"[203] following the murder by a Jew in Paris of the German Embassy's young Third Secretary, Ernst vom Rath. A German Foreign Office *Memorandum* of November 20th stated "a breaking off by the United States Government of [diplomatic] relations with Germany would be a logical conclusion of the policy which is outlined in the utterances of American statesmen and the savage anti-German press campaign....A rupture of relations would give Roosevelt the opportunity to continue openly his anti-German policy.....Roosevelt wishes to overthrow the [European] dictatorships and restore the world authority of Liberalism, the one and only true political creed [as he sees it].[204]

On **December 16th** it was reported that the Jewish[205] Department Store Macy's in New York had dismissed all employees with German surnames at the end of November and replaced them with Jews. "President [Roosevelt] is under the strongest pressure from radical Jewish circles, which, in view of German measures against Jews and allegedly also in view of the rights and interests of Jewish Americans, have demanded reprisals against Germany." In this respect "the United States is already fighting German trade whenever she can, especially in South America... The German Chargé d'Affairs in Washington D.C., lodged a "sharp protest" with the USA Under-Secretary of State, Sumner Wells, on **December 21st** against a speech made by the American Secretary of the Interior who had intentionally insulted the German Head of State and stated that the responsibility of a member of the USA Cabinet for this line of conduct was inadmissable. Welles refused to accept the protest, [laughably] comparing this scenario to observations made by the German Chancellor against former President Woodrow Wilson (WWI). The German Chargé d'Affairs broke off the discussion a this point, describing it as "hopeless".[206]

The American Government subsequently published a *Note* of protest (dated **11 Jan 1939**) they had handed to the German Foreign Office in Berlin which stated that "American [Jewish] citizens" in Germany should not be discriminated against. The following day President Roosevelt demanded more speedy preparedness for war for the purpose of 'defence against aggression', yet expressly declared that the USA in rearming was not thinking of participation in European wars or a policy of aggression. The German Chargé d'Affaires in Washington telegraphed Berlin that the President was "arbitrarily, and without reference to Congress, maneuvering American into a position similar to that of 1917."[207]

In a report from Count Jerzy Potocki, the Polish Ambassador in Washington DC, he warned his government in **1939** of the campaign there that was being organised pressing for war with Germany in which various Jewish intellectuals took part, such as Bernard Baruch, Felix Frankfurter, a Justice of the Supreme Court, Morgenthau, Secretary of the US Treasury, and others linked to President Franklin D Roosevelt, some of whom held many of the highest posts in the American Government.[208] William C. Bullitt, who worked in the Roosevelt Administration and was of Jewish descent, and who had been the USA's first ambassador to the Soviet Union, then France, had been working to convince Poland not to negotiate with Germany while also pressuring the British government to take pro-active steps against Germany. It has been argued that the Jewish community in America and Britain was determined to drive Britain into a war with Germany and used all of their financial and political leverage in order to bring about that very eventuality - Hollywood being a good example of how anti-German propaganda was spread. Potocki sent a report to the Polish Foreign Minister in Warsaw dated **12 January 1939** in which he said:

Count Potocki leaving the White House, late 1939

> *There is a feeling now prevalent in the United States marked by a growing hatred of Fascism, and above all Chancellor Hitler and everything connected with National Socialism. Propaganda is mostly in the hands of the Jews who control almost 100 percent of the radio, film, daily and periodical press. This propaganda is extremely coarse and presents Germany as black as possible; it is extremely effective as the public here is completely ignorant and knows nothing of the situation in Europe.*[209]

On **17th March 1939** Sumner Welles, Under-Secretary of State, told the German Chargé d'Affaires in Washington D.C. that the USA would be imposing economic sanctions against German imports within 48 hours. On the following day, the Chargé d'Affairs wrote further that the American press "campaign of hate directed against us" was absolute and included wild claims and conspiracy theories which were without substance. He said American public opinion felt that the USA should be "obliged to make the Western Hemisphere safe against the totalitarian Powers".[210]

The German Embassy in Warsaw wrote to the Foreign Office in Berlin on **21 March 1939**: "We have the impression here more and more that Biddle[211] the American Ambassador here, exercises an unfavourable influence on Polish policy. Biddle has the ear of Beck [Polish Foreign Minister] to a very considerable extent, and is a tool of Bullitt[212] the well-known American Ambassador in Paris, who is causing enough harm in any case. Biddle telephones Bullitt daily."[213]

On the **25 April 1939**, four months before the outbreak of the war, Bullitt called columnist Karl von Wiegand (chief European correspondent of the American International News Service) at the US Embassy in Paris and told him:

> *The war in Europe is decided. Poland is confident in the support of Britain and France and will not yield to German demands. America will go to war shortly after Britain and France.*

Many years after the war, Georges Bonnet, France's Foreign Minister in 1939, confirmed Bullitt's role as Roosevelt's deputy who pushed his country to war. In a letter to Hamilton Fish of 26 March 1971, Bonnet wrote:

> *One thing is certain, and that is that in 1939 Bullitt did everything he could to bring France to war.*

An important confirmation of Roosevelt and the Jews' decisive role in pushing Britain to war comes from the diary of James V. Forrestal, the USA Secretary of Defence. In his entry dated 27 December 1945 he wrote:

> *I played golf with former ambassador Joe Kennedy today. I asked him about his conversations with Roosevelt and British Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain from 1938. He*

> *said Chamberlain's position in 1938 was that England had nothing to fight for and couldn't risk going to war against Hitler. Hitler would not have fought the Soviet Union without further conflict with England had William Bullitt not insisted on Roosevelt in the summer of 1939 that the Germans should be provoked by Poland. Neither the French nor the British would have made Poland an occasion for war had it not been for the constant pressure from Washington... Chamberlain – Kennedy added – acknowledged that the United States and international Judaism had forced England into war.*

In his telephone conversations with Roosevelt in the summer of 1939, Joseph Kennedy continued to call for pressure on Chamberlain with an iron rod. When Poland's Ambassador Potocki was back in Warsaw, he spoke with Count Jan Szembek, the Polish Foreign Minister, about the growing danger of war. In his diary note of **6 July 1939**, Jan Szembek Potocki recorded his amazement at the calm atmosphere in Poland. Compared to the psychosis of war that had engulfed the United States and the entire West:

> *In the West*, Ambassador Potocki told Szembek, *there are all kinds of elements that are openly pushing for war: the Jews, the super capitalists, the arms dealers. Today they are all ready for the big thing, because they have found a place where the fire can be started: Danzig, and a nation ready to fight: Poland. They don't care about destroying our country. Indeed, as everything has to be rebuilt later, they can benefit a lot from that too.*

Excerpts from a telegram from the German Chargé d'Affaires in the USA to the Berlin Foreign Office on **August 10th**:

> *The American press persists in predicting, in its usual sensation-mongering manner, the outbreak of a European war....the responsibility is already being thrown onto the leaders of Germany....Though no-one here denies the German character of Danzig, its reincorporation into Germany is represented as the destruction of Poland's independence [The Free City of Danzig was never in Poland].....this recalls the situation during the Czech crisis of September 1938; and Polish acts of provocation are lightly dismissed as being the deliberate work of the Gestapo and the SS.....Yesterday the Polish Ambassador here said only a miracle could now bring about a peaceful solution and this depended solely on Germany.....As in 1914 British propaganda is readily accepted here, and Churchill's radio speeches also serve to establish exclusively Germany's war guilt....All diplomatic and other events in Germany are exploited here by the Press first and foremost as German preparations for war, including Count Csáky's and Count Ciano's visits, military manoeuvres, and the publicity given to the strength of the West Wall. Italy's alleged 'resistance' to Germany's "war policy" is emphasized at every opportunity."*[214]

On the **24 August 1939**, just one week before hostilities began, Chamberlain's military advisor, Sir Horace Wilson, went to Ambassador Kennedy with an urgent appeal from the British Prime Minister to President Roosevelt. Chamberlain regretted that the UK had guaranteed Poland in March, and now, in his desperation, turned to Roosevelt as the last hope to keep peace. He wanted the US President to "put pressure on Poland", change the course of the last hours and start peace talks with Germany. Kennedy told the USA State Department over the phone that the British "felt they could do nothing because of their obligations..." Although Roosevelt had an extraordinary historic chance to preserve peace in Europe, he rejected Neville Chamberlain's desperate plea. Kennedy reported that the British Prime Minister had lost all hope. Chamberlain had told Kennedy, "The nonsense is complete. This is what is scary. After all, we cannot save Poland. We can only wage a revenge war that means the destruction of Europe."[215]

By **November** the Political Department of the German Foreign Office believed that "a breaking-off by the United States Government of its relations with Germany would be a logical conclusion of the policy which is outlined in the utterances of American statesmen and the savage anti-German press campaign.....Roosevelt has, through the press which serves him, carried on without respite since his re-election, a campaign of incitement against National Socialist

Germany and has created in the minds of the American people a psychological receptiveness to any anti-German measures, even though these might in the end involve America in war..... Roosevelt wishes to overthrow the European dictatorships and restore the world authority of liberalism, the one and only political creed."[216]

Italy proposes conference

Italy did not want to go to war and following the outbreak of the German-Polish conflict the Italian Ambassador to Berlin, on instructions from Mussolini, handed Baron Weizsacker, Secretary of State at the German Foreign Office, at 10 a.m. on September 2nd, proposals for a conference which would also involve France, Britain, and Poland with the following proposals and comments as its basis:

1. An Armistice, which leaves the armies where they now are.
2. Convening of the conference within two to three days.
3. Settlement of the Polish-German dispute.

The idea, which originally emanated from Mussolini, *is now supported particularly by France*. It continued: "Danzig is already German, and Germany has already in her hands pledges which guarantee a part of her claims. Moreover, Germany has already had her 'moral satisfaction' If she accepted the proposal for a conference she would achieve all her aims and at the same time avoid a war, which even now looks like becoming general and of extremely long duration. The *Duce* does not wish to insist, but it is of the greatest moment to him that this should be immediately brought to the attention of Herr von Ribbentrop and the Fuhrer." The text of this communication was repeated by the German Foreign Office on September 2nd to Embassies in Paris, London, Rome and Moscow for the Heads of Missions. Meanwhile the German Foreign Minister, at 12.30 p.m., asked that "clarification" be obtained of the French and British Ambassadors [who were still] in Berlin. Count Ciano, Italy's Foreign Minister, had already telephoned his Ambassador in Berlin at 8.30 a.m. to say that **France in particular was greatly in favour of the Duce's proposal**, and that "the pressure comes at the moment from France, but England would follow".[217]

Twelve hours later, at 8.50 p.m. on September 2nd, the German Foreign Minister received the Italian Ambassador who informed him that the British were not prepared to enter into negotiations on the basis of the Italian proposal of mediation. The Ambassador stated that the *Duce* now considered his mediation proposal as no longer in being.[218]

German-Polish war

See Campaign in Poland

At 1.58 p.m. on **27th August, 1939** The British Ambassador at Warsaw telegraphed Viscount Halifax in London that Polish mobilisation preparations were practically complete. The following day at 5.15 p.m. The Ambassador again telegraphed Viscount Halifax to say "mobilisation will be complete by tonight" and that "concentration is in progress and should be 75% completed by August 30th." *General mobilization has not been declared* publicly. At 7.41 p.m. on **31 August 1939** the British Ambassador at Warsaw telegraphed Viscount Halifax in London that "Polish mobilisation is proceeding according to plan and smoothly."[219]

At 8 p.m. on August 31st uniformed Polish soldiers, speaking Polish, attacked the Gleiwitz broadcasting station in German Upper Silesia. The staff were all locked in the cellar. A soldier then broadcast: "This is Gleiwitz. The [radio] station is in Polish hands." By the time the first police arrived from their station 1 km away the intruders had left.[220]

"During the night" of 31 August - 1 September, 1939, the Poles blew up the massive and principal railway bridge at Dirschau and fighting took place with the Danzigers. The destruction of the Dirschau bridge was communicated to Charles Spencer at the British Foreign Office by Swedish diplomat Johan Dahlerus on September 1st at 9.50 a.m. (although he said he had been trying to get through for 3 hours). This would appear to show that Poland was the aggressor.[221]

At about 5 a.m., the German battleship *Schleswig-Holstein*, on a courtesy 'fly the flag visit' in Danzig harbour, opened fire on the illegal[222], Polish military base at the Westerplatte[223] at Danzig and the German army invaded Poland. As a result, two days later, on 3 September, Britain (with France in turn shortly following them) declared war on Germany. What began and should have remained a localized conflict over the fate of an ancient German city, Danzig, and negotiable border revisions, between two continental European nations, namely Germany and Poland, was now expanded by Britain and France into a continental war involving all of Europe's major powers.

No-one has ever adequately explained why Britain and France failed to declare war on the Soviet Union when they subsequently invaded Poland from the East and occupied about 30 per cent of that country.

In time, this European war would expand to include the Soviet Union (June 1941) and the USA (1942), and eventually most of the nations of the world (excluding South America).

Quotes

- *"In 1939, after Poland cooperated with Hitler — it did collaborate with Hitler, you know — Hitler offered Poland peace and a treaty of friendship and alliance (we have all the relevant documents in the archives), demanding in return that Poland give back to Germany the so-called Danzig Corridor, which connected the bulk of Germany with East Prussia and Konigsberg. After World War I, this territory was transferred to Poland, and instead of Danzig, a city of Gdansk emerged. Hitler asked them to give it amicably, but they refused. [...] As the Poles had not given the Danzig Corridor to Germany, and went too far, pushing Hitler to start World War II by attacking them. Why was it Poland against whom the war started on 1 September 1939? Poland turned out to be uncompromising, and Hitler had nothing to do but start implementing his plans with Poland. [...] After the victory in the Great Patriotic War, as we call World War II, all those territories were ultimately enshrined as belonging to Russia, to the USSR. As for Poland, it received, apparently in compensation, the lands which had originally being German: the eastern parts of Germany (these are now western lands of Poland). Of course, Poland regained access to the Baltic Sea, and Danzig, which was once again given its Polish name. So this was how this situation developed."* – Vladimir Putin in an interview with Tucker Carlson recorded on 6 February 2024 in the Kremlin in Moskow[224]

See also

- Revisionist views on the causes of the World Wars
- Causes of World War I
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- Treaty of Locarno
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- World War II
- Campaign in Poland
- Judea Declares War on Germany

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156. Mason, 1946; Kimmich, 1968; *German White Book*: Documents concerning the last phase of the German-Polish crisis, New York, 1939.
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161. Moltke was born in Oppeln in Upper Silesia, into one of Germany's most famous aristocratic families, and spoke fluent Polish. His father, Fredrich von Moltke, served as Prussian Minister of the Interior. Moltke was a devout Lutheran and held the standard nationalist-conservative views that were typical of the German aristocracy in the late 19th century.
162. Writing in **October 1937**
163. *Documents on German Foreign Policy 1918-1945* by an editorial board, His Majesty's Stationary Office, London, 1953, Series D, vol.v, p.20-1.
164. *The German White Book*, NY, 1939, p.4-5.
165. *Documents on German Foreign Policy 1919-1945* by an editorial committee, Series D., vol.vii, United States Government Printing Office, Washington D.C., 1956, pps:354-6.
166. Woodward, *et al*, 1954, Appendix III, pps:615-622, contains Molotov's speech (which appeared in *Pravda* the following day)
167. Woodward, et al., 1954, vol.vii, p.442-3, no.590.
168. German Documents, 1956, p.39.
169. *German Documents*, 1956, p.67.
170. *German Documents*, 1956, p.73.
171. Taylor, 1961, p.212-3
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173. A Liberal, Simon's term of office saw the failure of the World Disarmament Conference (1932-1934)
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175. Taylor, 1961, p.212
176. *German White Book* - Concerning the Last Phase of the German-Polish Crisis, New York, 1939. These comments are repeated throughout.
177. *Documents on British Foreign Policy 1919-1939* vol.v, London, 1952, p.403, Telegram 349.
178. Taylor, 1961, p.212.
179. Watt, 1989, p.487.
180. Woodward, 1952, p.284.
181. Taylor, 1961, p.195-6.
182. Woodward, et al, 1952, vol.v, no.266 on p.283
183. Signed by R. L. Speaight.
184. Miroslaw Arciszewski was Under-Secretary of State in the Polish Foreign Ministry.
185. British Ambassador at Warsaw.

186. *Documents on British Foreign Policy 1919-1939* edited by Professor E. L. Woodward, M.A., Rohan Butler, M.A., and Anne Orde, M.A., Third Series, vol.v, 1939, Her Majesty's Stationary Office, London, 1952, p.275, Telegram 254 from British Embassy in Berlin to Viscount Halifax, 22 April 1939 which gives full details. See also British Foreign Office *Memorandum* of the 4th May 1939 containing the full German proposals regarding Danzig and the Polish Corridor as well as the indifferent Polish counter-proposals from March-April 1939, on pages 415-420.
187. German Documents, 1956, pps: 4 & 9-10.
188. Woodward, *et al*, 1954, no,35, p.36.
189. Woodward, *et al*, 1954, p.57.
190. Woodward, *et al*, 1954, p.178-9.
191. Woodward, *et al*, 1954, p.311.
192. Woodward, *et al*, 1954, p.195-6 & p.214.
193. Woodward, *et al*, 1954, p.370-1.
194. Woodward, *et al*, 1954, no.587-8, p.440-1.
195. *German White Book*, NY., 1939, p.3.
196. see also the report from Dr. Todt, Inspector-General for German Highways, to the Foreign Minister in Berlin, dated 27 October 1938, on the proposed *Reichsautobahn* through the Polish Corridor, which goes into considerable detail, in *Documents of German Foreign Policy 1918-1945* by an editorial committee, Her Majesty's Stationary Office, London, 1953, p.113-114.
197. *The German White Book* - Documents concerning the last phase of the German-Polish Crisis, New York, 1939, p.9 number 7.
198. *Documents on German Foreign Policy 1918-1945* by an editorial board, Series D, vol.vii, US Government Printing Office, Washington D.C., 1956, p:447-450.
199. A neutral intermediary in the confidence of the British Cabinet, of the Embassy in Berlin, and of the German Government.
200. *Documents on British Foreign Policy 1919-1939* Third Series, vol.vii, 1954, p.440-2, and p.445-6, no.597.
201. Woodward, Professor E. L., Butler, Rohan, & Orde, Anne, editors,*Documents on British Foreign Policy 1919-1939*, Third Series, vol.vii, Her Majesty's Stationary Office, London, 1954, p.457-8, no.619.
202. *German White Book*: Documents Concerning the Last Phase of the German-Polish Crisis, New York, Sept 1939.
203. A German Decree of 12 Nov 1938 excluded Jews from the German economy and all Jews became forbidden from 1 Jan 1939 to carry on retail business, export business or mail-order business, as well as to carry on a trade independently. The Decree also applied to Jews who possessed foreign citizenship: - *German Documents*, 1951, p.649.
204. *German Documents on Foreign Policy 1918-1945* by an editorial board, Series D, vol.iv, USA Government Printing Office, Washington DC, 1951, p.639-649.
205. Owned by the Jewish Straus family.
206. *German Documents*, 1951, p.662-3.
207. *German Documents*, 1951, pps:652, 656, 661-675.
208. Polish Documents on the Origin of the War, cited in *State Secrets* by Comte Léon de Poncins, UK edition, 1975, ISBN 0-85172-911-8, p.31.
209. *The German White Paper - the full texts of the Polish Documents*, issued by the German Foreign Office with a Foreword by C. Hartley Grattan, published by Howell, Soskin and Company, New York City, 1940, p.29. These are some of the documents seized by the Germans after they occupied Warsaw the previous year.
210. German Documents, 1956, pps:14 & 34-6.
211. Anthony Joseph Drexel Biddle, jr.
212. William Christian Bullitt, jr. (1891–1967) was an American journalist, novelist and diplomat. He was the first U.S. ambassador to the Soviet Union and the U.S. ambassador to France during World War II.
213. *German Documents*, 1956, p.74.
214. German Documents, 1956, p.8-9.
215. *Roosevelts Weg in den Krieg: Geheimdokumente zur Kriegspolitik des Praesidenten der Vereinigten Staaten*.
216. German Documents, 1951, p.645-8. This *Memorandum* was compiled by Dr. Ernst Woermann, Director of the Political Department of the German Foreign Ministry where he also held the title of Under-Secretary of State.
217. *Documents on German Foreign Policy 1918-1945* by an editorial board, Series D, vol.vii, US Government Printing Office, Washington D.C., 1956, p.509-513.
218. German Documents on German Foreign Policy 1918-1945*, 1956, p.524-8.*
219. *Documents on British Foreign Policy 1919-1939*, Third Series, vol.vii, 1954, pps: 300,330 & 453, nos.371, 424 & 612. It should be noted that Kennard was 100% pro-Polish.
220. See Gleiwitz incident. Post-WWII Allied propaganda, based on the "evidence" of a single German officer trying to avoid being prosecuted at Nuremberg, have said this was a German *false flag* operation. This assertion has continued with embellishment since 1945 to try and make the lie truth.

221. Woodward, et al., 1954, vol.vii, telegram from the British Ambassador in Berlin to Viscount Halifax in London, p.476-7 no.644.
222. Kimmich, 1968, pps:98-100, 131-138.
223. Martel, 1930, p.75.
224. Interview to Tucker Carlson (http://en.kremlin.ru/events/president/news/73411) (Archive (https://web.archive.org/web/20240209093426/http://en.kremlin.ru/events/president/news/73411))

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